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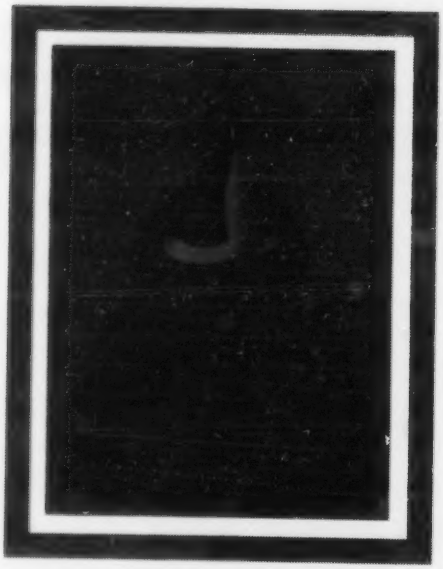
Corporate and Personal Property Registries

Special Operating Agency



2000/01 Annual Report

Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

Corporate and Personal Property Registries

We facilitate and support commerce in the province by providing the framework to register and deliver information, including:

- **creating and registering business and not-for-profit entities,**
- **registering and securing personal property interests, and**
- **registering ownership and location of manufactured homes.**

The vision of the Registries is that all information can be submitted or retrieved electronically by our customers from any location at any time.

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See page 18 for telephone and fax numbers.

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Message from the Registrar

I am pleased to submit the fifth annual report of the Corporate and Personal Property Registries. The Registries became a special operating agency on April 1, 1996. Special operating agencies are required to submit an annual report that outlines their major accomplishments, results and performance for the year.

An important component of all well-performing organizations is their staff. Registries' staff have worked diligently in carrying out their daily tasks. Their dedication and commitment are key to the Registries' success as a special operating agency.

A significant benefit to the Registries becoming a special operating agency continues to be budget stability as the Registries have been exempted from budget restraint initiatives and across the board reductions. Without this stability, planning and implementation of short and long term projects would have been very difficult or impossible.

In terms of overall performance, Registries performance was good in 2000/01. The volume of work completed was around 3.0 per cent lower than the previous year, while revenues were about 2.5 per cent lower than in 1999/2000. As a result of declining volumes, the Registries also reduced the staff complement by 2.3 FTEs. Largely as a result of this efficiency, operational spending was about $293,000 under budget. At the same time, service improvements were made in a number of areas as three more services were within standard than the previous year.

A new *Company Act* was passed by the Legislature in July of 1999. The new act will result in streamlined processes for incorporating and maintaining a company. During the last year, Registries completed the detailed business requirements, design and a Web user interface for the new *Company Act* system. However, the systems project is on hold, as the new *Company Act* requires more work. Part of this work is further review by a group of corporate lawyers. When the act is finalized and the government has committed to reintroduce it into the Legislature, the next phase of the project will begin.

With the *Company Act* project on hold, the Corporate Registry is reviewing the feasibility of allowing clients to submit annual reports online.

The *Company Act* project team also initiated an Internet credit card project in cooperation with Provincial Treasury. A bank was selected to provide this service and a pilot project undertaken.

The Corporate and Personal Property Registries continue to have high transaction volumes. They are the second largest in the country. Although significant progress has been made to provide electronic access to our services, more work is needed and projects are scheduled over the next year to bring more services online.

During the year, Registries managers had the opportunity to participate in conferences on Corporate Law, Personal Property Law and related registry issues. Attendees at the conferences were from Canada, the United States and other countries. Although there are differences in the legislation of each jurisdiction, it is important to ensure our strategic directions and practices are uniform with other registries across Canada and the United States. With most provincial, state and federal governments now working on e-commerce initiatives, we must ensure our registries continue to attract and support business by providing streamlined registration filing services using electronic service delivery.

John S. Powell
Registrar

Organization, Mission and Mandate

Corporate Registry

The role of the Corporate Registry is to register and maintain information concerning various types of corporations and firms, and to provide that information to the public. While the registrar has some regulatory responsibilities under the legislation, the Corporate Registry does not exist to manage, direct or intervene in the conduct of any of these entities.

The information available from the Corporate Registry is created as a result of the incorporation of B.C. companies, societies, cooperatives and the registration of proprietorships, partnerships and extraprovincial companies. As each entity is created or registered, a paper file and an electronic file are created. These files contain the name and registered address of the entity, the name and address of the principals, the date of incorporation or registration, the rules of conduct for the entity as well as other miscellaneous information on liquidation, receivership, etc.

The first step in creating or registering a legal entity is the approval and reservation of the corporate or business name. The registrar has the authority to approve or reject a name for any good or valid reason. Once the name is approved and reserved, the next step is to incorporate a corporation (a company, society or cooperative) or register a proprietorship/partnership or an extraprovincial company. Each registration or incorporation is reviewed for compliance with the appropriate statute and if accepted, some key information described above is made available electronically. All information is available in the paper format.

All incorporated entities must also file certain documents to ensure the information provided to the public is up-to-date. Failure to file these documents may result in the dissolution of the corporation. Restoration through the court is the only remedy for a dissolved corporation. At times, a corporation may alter its rules of conduct, change its name or amalgamate with another entity or entities. These alterations are also reviewed for compliance with the appropriate statute and do not take effect until filed by the registrar.

The registrar does not have the authority to intervene in the private affairs of any entity. Nevertheless, members of the general public who have a complaint regarding the conduct of a company, society or cooperative are provided advice and guidance on how to proceed in resolving a dispute.

Decisions made by the registrar affecting any party may be appealed to the Commercial Appeals Commission. Similarly, the Office of the Ombudsman is available to individuals who feel the registrar has not dealt with an issue in an appropriate manner, and the affected party has exhausted the appeal process under the legislation. This process allows for independent assessment to ensure administrative integrity has not been compromised.

Personal Property Registry

Registration in the Personal Property Registry is by notice filing. Upon request and payment of the prescribed fees, all of the liens created against personal property in the province are registered, whether the property belongs to a corporation or an individual. Registration establishes priority positions between competing liens in personal property. It provides the information base for the enquiry and search system

Customers are encouraged to search the registry and register their own liens and discharges by remote computer link from their place of business. These services are also provided by registry staff.

Manufactured Home Registry (MHR)

The role of the Manufactured Home Registry is to register and maintain details of ownership and location of all manufactured homes registered in the province. Information maintained in the MHR protects owners and purchasers of manufactured homes and improves the security of lenders in financing purchases of manufactured homes. No sale, transfer or purchase of a manufactured home in British Columbia is effective unless the transaction is registered in the MHR.

The MHR ensures taxing authorities collect any outstanding taxes before a manufactured home moves to a new location through the issuance of transport permits.

Highlights of the Year 2000/01

Corporate Registry Improvements

New Company Act

The new *Company Act* was passed by the Legislature in July 1999. The Registries subsequently completed most of the detailed requirements for the system that is required to support the new act. However, since changes are still being made to the new act, the project has been put on hold until the contents of the new act are finalized.

Internet Credit Card Payment Project

The *Company Act* Project Team initiated an Internet credit card project in cooperation with Provincial Treasury. A bank was selected to provide this service and a pilot project undertaken.

Automate Annual Reports

With the *Company Act* project on hold, the Corporate Registry commenced examination of allowing clients to complete annual reports on-line.

Single Business Number

The Corporate Registry participated in a government-wide project to enable businesses to use the same identification number for its dealings with numerous federal and provincial government organizations.

Personal Property Electronic Commerce

Remote Changes

Remote changes went into production in the fall of 2000. By the end of the fiscal year about a third of all changes were being done electronically.

New Home Page

A new home page for the Personal Property Registry was completed and put into production on the ministry's Web site.

Express Discharge Processing

Most of the system development work to enable staff in the Revenue Unit to process simple discharges has been completed.

Manufactured Home Registry System

Improve Rejection Letters

Paragraphs have been developed and refined for Manufactured Home Registry staff to use Oracle rejection letters.

New Home Page

A new home page for the Manufactured Home Registry was completed and put into production on the ministry's Web site.

Other Registries Initiatives

Business Continuation

The Registries' Business Continuation Plan is complete and regular updates were done during the year.

Test Systems Disaster Recovery

The Registries participated in a dry run disaster recovery at ITSD during the summer.

Organization Records Classification (ORCS)

The Registries completed a draft ORCS classification, including a retention schedule. It includes requirements for the new *Company Act*. The document is almost ready to be submitted for approval.

Administrative Records Classification (ARCS)

Staff in administrative areas have started organizing administrative records.

IACA Conference

All the detailed planning for a conference of corporate administrators from across North America was completed.

Service Measures

Services Provided

The main functions of the Registries are registration of information and provision of searches concerning that information.

Table 1 shows total active files for all the types of information registered.

Table 1
Total Active Files
as at March 31

	2001	2000	1999
Corporate Registry			
B.C. Companies	269,794	265,799	260,641
Extraprovincial Companies*	18,046	17,312	16,627
Societies	22,141	21,471	20,750
Cooperatives	558	608	655
Partnerships	275,525	256,244	236,081
Personal Property Registry			
Active Financing Statements	1,070,057	1,043,966	1,019,664
Manufactured Home Registry			
Registered	68,873	69,034	69,083
Exempt	16,810	15,910	14,831

*Extraprovincial companies include Limited Liability Companies.

Total Services Provided

Corporate Registry volumes generally decreased in 2000/01. Following a rebound in 1999/2000, volumes for the establishment of new businesses resumed their decline in 2000/01.

Overall volumes in the Personal Property Registry held steady in 2000/01, although initial registrations continued to decline. There were only 88 per cent as many initial registrations in 2000/01 as there were in 1997/98.

Manufactured Home Registry volumes continued to decline. There were only 41 per cent as many initial registrations in 2000/01 as there were in 1997/98.

Table 2 provides a summary of the main services offered by the Registries.

Table 2
Total Services Provided

	2000/01	1999/2000	1998/99	% change, 1999/2000 to 2000/01
Corporate Registry				
Name Reservation Requests	69,485	72,704	67,467	-4.4
Formations				
— B.C. Companies	20,740	21,832	20,535	-5.0
— Extraprovincial Companies	2,617	2,461	2,179	6.3
— Societies and Cooperatives	1,600	1,713	1,584	-6.6
Partnerships	21,496	21,528	19,854	-0.1
Dissolutions	20,319	20,153	17,846	0.8
General Filings	313,961	310,472	309,384	1.1
Searches	387,660	378,459	385,991	2.4
Personal Property Registry				
Registrations				
— Financing Statements	339,976	351,130	362,776	-3.2
— Renewals*	26,981	44,722	23,286	-39.7
— Changes	31,451	30,531	29,467	3.0
— Discharges	180,159	184,288	183,454	-2.2
Searches	710,535	759,750	745,051	-6.5
Manufactured Home Registry				
Initial Registrations	845	1,361	1,436	-37.9
Transfers of Ownership	7,761	8,565	9,025	-9.4
Transport Permits	2,303	2,714	2,944	-15.2
Searches	36,454	39,039	40,280	-6.6

*There was a major one-time renewal initiative by one client in 1999/2000. This was done soon after the introduction of remote renewals.

Turnaround Times

One of the goals for the Registries is to decrease turnaround times for the provision of services. More areas of the office provided services within published standards in 2000-01 than in 1999-2000. This is the fourth consecutive year in which the Registries have improved this key aspect of service for its clients. This improvement was achieved while the Registries reduced its staff complement. Having 16 of the 19 main service areas within standard is an exceptional accomplishment. Table 3 shows average annual service turnaround times being achieved for the various types of services provided by the Registries.

Note that this table provides details for only the highest volume services provided to clients. These are also the most important services for Registries clients. The totals at the bottom of the table are for all Registries services that have been measured consistently over the past three years.

Table 3
Service Turnaround Standards
Average Performance for the Year

	Standard	2000/01	1999/2000	1998/99
Corporate Registry				
Name Reservation	2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Incorporation	5	5.5	4.1	5.0
Partnership Registration	5	4.6	5.3	3.7
Alterations	5	4.0	3.9	3.9
Annual Reports, filings	10	8.6	14.7	18.1
Dissolutions, etc.	5	2.8	2.9	3.6
Search	3	0.8	0.9	0.9
Societies Formation	5	1.8	2.3	3.6
Societies Alterations	5	2.6	3.3	8.4
Societies Filings	10	5.8	7.6	12.0
Personal Property Registry				
Registrations	2	1.1	1.7	1.7
Search	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Manufactured Home Registry				
Registration	2	1.0	0.9	0.9
Summary				
Meeting standard		16	13	11
Not meeting standard		3	6	8

Remote Registrations and Searches

A goal of the Registries is to increase electronic access to information. Use of remote services is a major indicator of Registries' success.

There were no new remote services introduced in 2000/01. However, efforts to increase remote filings for Personal Property discharges and renewals were successful.

Table 4 shows the various services that are available for clients to complete electronically and the percentage of times the clients in fact perform the service.

Table 4
Services Performed Electronically by Clients
(Per Cent)

	Target	2000/01	1999/2000	1998/99
	(Per Cent)			
Corporate Registry				
Name Reservation Requests	76	79	77	73
Searches	94	94	94	93
Personal Property Registry				
Financing Statements	97	98	97	96
Discharges	50	50	35	19
Renewals	76	87	74	N/A
Searches	97.5	98	98	98
Manufactured Home Registry				
Initial Registration	50	55	50	N/A
Transport Permits	65	65	63	38
Searches	90	91	90	89

Expenditures and Revenues

One of the key requirements for the Registries to succeed as a special operating agency is achieving administrative efficiency. The next four tables focus on reporting key administrative facts.

The Registries was able to stay within its operating budget of $8.256 million for 2000/01 and ended the year with a surplus of about $293,000.

The Registries also was allocated $2 million to commence work related to implementing a new *Company Act*. However, since the project has been halted pending finalization of the new *Company Act*, most of this money was not spent. Under the terms of the Registries' SOA agreement these funds may be available for work done to implement the new act in future years.

Table 5 shows expenditures for the year compared with the budget.

Table 5
Registries Expenditures

	2000/01 Budget	2000/01 Actual	1999/2000 Actual	1998/99 Actual
Operations	$	$	$	$
Salaries	4,530,000	4,188,013	4,151,539	4,409,226
Supplemental salaries	45,000	38,803	44,230	43,512
Employee benefits	821,000	763,818	900,867	957,971
Commissions and boards	2,000	0	1,854	0
Travel	55,000	19,776	19,410	12,797
Professional services	27,000	332,378	88,028	10,442
Information systems — operations	1,010,000	754,548	814,148	915,800
Office and business expenses	773,000	838,301	719,248	770,615
Office furniture and equipment*	N/A	N/A	78,350	27,079
Advertising/publications	17,000	0	5,333	8,325
Statutory notices	118,000	151,547	129,658	111,491
Amortization expenses	241,000	198,329	241,756	N/A
Building occupancy	657,000	669,817	769,694	821,489
Other expenses	0	8,000	0	0
Total Operating Costs	**8,256,000**	**7,963,330**	**7,964,115**	**8,088,747**
2000/01 Operating Surplus		**292,670**		
Capital				
Office furniture and equipment*	21,000	53,745	N/A	N/A
System development	1,952,000	595,596	0	54,845
System acquisitions	100,000	34,788	133,570	103,583
Tenant improvements	50,000	0	0	0
Total Capital Costs	**2,123,000**	**684,129**	**133,570**	**158,428**

*Office furniture and equipment expenses over $1,000 were capitalized for the first time in 2000/01.

The total annual staff allocation for the Registries was 118.0 full time equivalent employees (FTEs). This included 3.1 FTEs for the *Company Act* project. For the total year, the Registries utilized 108.5 FTEs.

This is a reduction of about 2.3 operations staff compared to 1999/2000. The main reason for the reduction is that the decrease in volumes in 1998 through 2000 resulted in fewer staff being required. In addition, the combined Personal Property Registries (Manufactured Home Registry and Personal Property Registry) also reduced their staffing level as benefits from automation and combining the two registries continue to be realized.

Table 6 shows the utilization of staff.

Table 6
FTE Allocation

	2000/2001 Budget	2000/2001 Actual	1999/2000 Actual	1998/99 Actual
	# of FTE's			
Corporate Registry				
Incorporations	18.0	17.6	17.6	17.3
Names	12.0	11.0	11.6	11.8
Examining	25.0	23.1	23.8	25.9
Records	12.0	11.9	11.4	11.1
Societies	10.0	10.0	10.1	10.0
Personal Property Registries	15.0	13.8	15.1	19.6
Support Areas				
Revenue	10.0	8.8	9.1	9.5
Finance and Administration	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.9
Systems	4.0	3.2	4.1	4.1
Management	6.3	5.7	5.5	5.9
Company Act Project	3.1	0.7	0.0	N/A
Total	**118.0**	**108.5**	**110.8**	**118.1**

The net revenue generated by the Registries for the fiscal year was $35.6 million. This is a decrease of about $0.9 million from 1999/2000. A large part of the decrease happened in the final four months of the fiscal year. Table 7 shows revenues generated by each registry.

Table 7
Registries Revenues

	2000/01	1999/2000	1998/99	% Change, 1999/2000 to 2000/01
	$	$	$	Per Cent
Corporate Registry	24,716,547	25,039,047	24,120,236	−1.3
Personal Property Registry	10,161,582	10,646,071	10,964,603	−4.6
Manufactured Home Registry	740,343	837,674	917,597	−11.6
Total	**35,618,472**	**36,522,792**	**36,002,436**	**−2.5**

One of the measures of Registries' efficiency is the ratio of revenues to expenditures. In 2000/01 the Registries generated $4.47 in revenue for every $1.00 it spent. Table 8 provides the information used for calculating this ratio.

Table 8
Ratio of Revenues to Expenditures

	2000/01	1999/2000	1998/99
Corporate Registry — Formations	4.69	4.97	4.88
Corporate Registry — Maintenance	4.00	3.98	3.92
Corporate Registry — Societies	0.71	0.73	0.75
Personal Property Registry	18.42	18.51	11.04
Manufactured Home Registry	0.89	1.04	1.08
Average	**4.47**	**4.63**	**4.39**

Another measure of Registries' efficiency is the cost for each service provided. The Registries uses a weighting system to make its various services comparable. In 2000/01 it cost $8.49 for each service provided. Table 9 provides the information used to calculate this cost.

Table 9
Cost per Unit of Service

	2000/01	1999/2000	1998/99
Expenditures	$7,963,330	$7,964,115	$8,192,330
Services	938,157	972,279	958,967
Ratio	**$8.49**	**$8.19**	**$8.54**

Staff Satisfaction

An important goal for the Registries is to improve staff involvement and commitment. The main tool for measuring success in this regard has been to conduct a survey of staff satisfaction.

The survey uses a five-point scale, with a value of "1" being defined as poor and a value of "5" being defined as excellent. The overall rating in 2000/01 was 3.39, compared to 3.48 for the same set of questions asked a year earlier.

Ratings declined in four areas. The number in parentheses represents the decline in the rating (a scale of 1 to 5 is used):

- Computer systems (0.22)
- Working for the Registries (0.20)
- The person he/she reports to (0.15)
- How the person feels about his/her job (0.14)

Ratings improved in two areas:

- Work area (0.08)
- Air quality (0.05)

In addition, training was added for the first time. Training was the second lowest ranked item on the survey.

User Forums

Corporate Registry User Forum

The Corporate Registry User Forum is composed of representatives from the major user groups of the registry. Members review, discuss and advise the registry on proposed changes to registry forms, practices and procedures. In addition, they provide feedback to and from their supporting organization and the registry.

The user forum was updated in February 2001 on the wind-up of the *Company Act* Project. The registry plans to meet with the user forum again in the fall of 2001 to discuss on-line filing of annual reports.

Personal Property Registry User Forum

The membership of the Personal Property Registry User Forum is comprised of representatives of the various user groups of the registry. Input from user forum members is particularly useful when changes are being considered to the remote system, forms, or internal practices and procedures. Representatives also provide a communication link between their supporting organization and the registry.

The user forum was inactive in 2000/01.

Manufactured Home Registry User Forum

As in the other user forums, this group is composed of representatives from the varied client groups doing business with the registry. They review, discuss and provide input to the registry on proposed changes to registry forms, the remote system, and internal practices and procedures.

The user forum was inactive in 2000/01.

A Look Ahead for 2001/02

The Registries will continue to work towards having all information available electronically, so all information may be submitted or retrieved electronically by our customers from any location at any time. With the addition of remote change statements to the Personal Property Registry, all services in the Personal Property Registry and the Manufactured Home Registry that can be automated are available to clients electronically.

In the Corporate Registry, detailed business requirements and a technical design for the new *Company Act* system are complete. The development and implementation of the system is on hold until final revisions to the new act are complete.

A key deliverable this year is the implementation of the Corporate Registry annual report system to enable all clients to file their annual reports electronically. In the Corporate Registry, annual reports are the largest volume of filing transactions. This facility will enable Corporate Registry staff and clients to gain experience with electronic filing and enable us to test a new payment method of using a credit card over the Internet. This payment method is in addition to our current methods of cash, cheque, debit card or deposit account.

Also key to electronic filing in the Corporate Registry is a fee incentive for our clients. Registries will be pursuing fee changes to encourage clients to file electronically.

Legislation Administered by the Registries

Company Act

The *Company Act* is the cornerstone legislation that underpins most commercial activity in the province. It sets out how companies are created, dissolved or reorganized. It establishes the rights of shareholders and responsibilities of directors. The act is intended to be enabling rather than regulatory. It establishes the office of the Registrar of Companies and requires companies to file certain information and documents with the registry. It also provides for public access to these records. These records include incorporation documents, annual reports, directors' notices, and addresses of both the registered and records offices of the company.

Society Act

The *Society Act* provides for the formation and conduct of non-profit organizations. These organizations are very diverse in their purposes and include charitable organizations. Like companies, a society incorporated under this act is a separate legal entity. The act requires societies to file certain information with the registrar, similar to information filed by a company. It also provides for public access to that information.

Cooperative Association Act

The *Cooperative Association Act* (the Act) sets out how cooperatives are formed and how they operate. Like other corporations, a cooperative association is a legal entity separate from its members. In addition, the act outlines the principles and methods by which an association is organized, operated and administered on a cooperative basis. One aspect of the cooperative basis is that each member of a cooperative has one vote regardless of the amount of capital the member has contributed. Cooperatives are required to file information with the registrar similar to a company or society.

Partnership Act

The *Partnership Act* sets out the rules for determining when a partnership exists and the rights between the partners. It also provides for the creation and registration of limited partnerships. A limited partnership is an investment vehicle where the general partners run the partnership and the limited partners are liable only to the extent that they contribute to the partnership. While the act does not give a partnership legal entity status it does require, for disclosure purposes, that a declaration be filed with the registrar if a partnership or proprietorship carries on the business of trading, manufacturing or mining.

Personal Property Security Act

On October 1, 1990, the *Personal Property Security Act* became the single statute regulating registration of liens against personal property in British Columbia. It contains provisions dealing with establishing security agreements, registering security interests, priorities between secured creditors and other claimants, enforcement of security interests, conflicts of laws, and many other matters relevant to personal property transactions. The act establishes the office of the Personal Property Registry and establishes processes for registration of security interests. It also provides for public access to registered information.

Manufactured Home Act

The *Manufactured Home Act* provides for the registration of ownership and location details on manufactured homes in the province. It establishes the office of the Manufactured Home Registry and establishes processes for registration of ownership details and issuance of transport permits to move a manufactured home. It also provides for public access to registered information. The act provides authority for the collector having taxing authority over a manufactured home to confirm that no taxes are in arrears or delinquent prior to issuance of a transport permit.

Other

In addition, the registrar has some responsibility in a number of other acts including:

- *Company Clauses Act*
- *Credit Union Incorporation Act*
- *Financial Institutions Act*
- *Repairers' Lien Act*
- *Miscellaneous Registrations Act*
- numerous private acts involving the creation of legal entities

Publications Available

- Incorporating a Company in B.C. (brochure)
- Registering Your Business (brochure)
- Personal Property Registry: Registration and Search Guide
- Personal Property Registry: Registry Information Sheet (pamphlet)

Visit our Web site at http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries

Our Phone and Fax Numbers

	From the Lower Mainland (no charge)	From the rest of the province	FAX
Corporate Registry			
General Information (phone tree)	604 775-1041	250 387-7848	250 356-0206
Name Reservation/Partnerships	604 775-1044	250 356-2893	250 356-1428
Incorporations	604 775-1045	250 356-8648	250 356-8923
Incorporations — Alterations	604 660-0122	250 387-2700	250 356-8923
Corporate Dissolutions	604 775-2585	250 356-5986	250 356-6422
Corporate Examining	604 775-1047	250 356-8626	250 356-6422
Societies and Cooperatives	604 775-1046	250 356-8673	250 356-6977
Search and Photocopy	604 775-1040	250 387-5101	250 356-0206
Records (files)		250 356-8615	
Personal Property Registry			
Registration Information	604 775-1048	250 356-8609	250 387-3055
Search	604 775-1043	250 356-8600	250 387-3055
Manufactured Home Registry			
Registration	604 775-1042	250 356-8609	250 387-3055
Search	604 775-1042	250 356-8600	250 387-3055
Office-Wide numbers			
Refunds		250 356-9417	250 356-9422
Administration		250 356-8665	250 356-9422
Management and Systems		250 356-8661	250 356-9422